



**TESTIMONY OF YALE NEW HAVEN HEALTH SYSTEM
SUBMITTED TO THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
Friday, March 15, 2013**

SB 968, An Act Concerning Reports Of Nurse Staffing Levels

Yale New Haven Health System (YNHHS) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony concerning **SB 968, An Act Concerning Reports Of Nurse Staffing Levels**. As we understand it, this bill seeks to require hospitals to submit annual reports on prospective nurse staffing plans and quarterly reports of actual daily nurse staffing levels to the Department of Public Health. YNHHS opposes SB 968 because additional annual and quarterly filing requirements would impose a costly and unnecessary administrative burden to our affiliate hospitals without improving quality.

YNHHS is Connecticut's leading healthcare system with over 18,000 employees and nearly 6000 medical staff who cared for more than 93,000 inpatients and 1.4 million outpatients last year, alone.

The Yale New Haven Health System, through Bridgeport, Greenwich and Yale-New Haven Hospitals, and their affiliated organizations, provide comprehensive, cost-effective, advanced patient care characterized by safety, quality and service. We offer our patients a range of healthcare services, from primary care to the most complex care available anywhere in the world. YNHHS hospital affiliates care for more than one quarter of the State's Medicaid clients and provide millions in free and uncompensated care to those who need our high quality services and can not pay for them. In addition to being our community's largest employers and significant economic engines, we are the ultimate safety net and provide care 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

YNHHS hospitals continuously assess patient care needs and consider a multitude of factors beyond numbers and ratios to make staffing decisions. For example, we must staff differently in an intensive care unit than a medical unit. Our psychiatric units are staffed differently than those in the Smilow Cancer Hospital. We consider the severity a patient's condition, age, cognitive and functional ability, and stage of recovery. Equally important to staffing decisions are factors related to staff, such as licensure, educational and skill level, tenure on the patient unit, and level of experience with a particular type of patient care. None of these critically important factors are captured by counting the number of patients and staff.

To assure high quality and safe patient care, we must accommodate changes in our volume, acuity, and the needs of our patients and to accomplish this, staffing levels and skill mix are constantly adjusted. Quarterly reporting will not provide an accurate reflection of actual staffing levels.

SB 968 will not accomplish meaningful patient care quality goals. Instead it will increase costs by adding an administrative burden. We are expected to meet the increased demand for hospital services with the implementation of health care reform, while managing significant decreases in funding such as those contained in the December deficit mitigation plan which took over \$25 million from YNHHS hospitals midyear and those that are being considered as part of the Governor's budget proposal which would further reduce our funding by \$155 million over two years. We must focus our resources on patient care initiatives that will ensure safe, high quality care for all who rely on us.

We urge you not to support SB 968 and thank you for your consideration of our position.